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Readiness Roadmap Charted at Annual Statewide Conference

Hundreds of First 5 state and county commissioners, staff, stakeholders, partners and friends attended First 5's Next 5: Roadmap to Readiness Statewide Conference in Anaheim last week and left with newfound knowledge designed to help them prepare children to start school ready to learn.

"It's our hope this conference will provide fresh ideas and renewed inspiration for you to take back to your local commission and First 5 work," said First 5 Executive Director Kris Perry in opening the conference. "We have had a strong start. And I feel confident it can only lead to a better future."

State Commission Chair Hector Ramirez, Commissioners Carla Dartis and Don Attore attended the two-day conference along with many new local commissioners and staff.



First 5 Executive Director Kris Perry welcomed Arthur Rolnick to the podium for his opening keynote address.

The conference included an inspiring keynote address by Arthur Rolnick of the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis. In his talk, "Investing in Early Childhood Development: an Economic Analysis to Guide Public Policy," Rolnick told the audience, "I want you to think that early childhood development is economic development, and it's economic development with a very, very, very high return."

He asked the attendees to remember that important message if they didn't remember anything else from his keynote address. "That's the critical take-away," he added.

Rolnick has done extensive research about the positive economic impact of early childhood development and used the information as a basis for starting the Minnesota Early Learning Foundation (MELF), a pilot children's resource entitlement program.



First 5 Commissioner Carla Dartis welcomed and introduced Harriet Meyer.

Other keynote speakers included Harriet Meyer, Ounce of Prevention president. "Early childhood is about re-defining education," she said. "The only way to sustain the change in the child's trajectory is to change the parents' trajectory."

Linda M. Espinosa, retired associate professor, University of Missouri opened day two with a keynote on promoting success for English language learners.

"All infants have the innate capacity to learn another language," she said. Espinosa talked about how genetics, environment and experiences contribute to school readiness.



Linda M. Espinosa talked about promoting success for English language learners. "Having a second language is not a problem," she said. "It is a gift and we all benefit."

There were 800 conference participants registered who attended numerous workshops and discussions on a wide variety of topics. As Kris Perry closed the conference she called it “a meeting of the minds where for two days every year we take the time to sharpen our craft, explore new opportunities and build upon our collective vision for First 5 and for our children.”

Perry thanked county commissions, stakeholders and other partners for the innovative programs developed during the last 10 years. “Together, we will continue to show the nation that First 5 is a leader who is fostering the seed of greatness in our children,” she said.

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Statewide Pre-Conference: School Readiness

The annual statewide Pre-Conference Institute covered School Readiness, Evaluation, Financial Planning, and New Commissioner Orientation.

Sheila Anderson, president and CEO of the Child Abuse Prevention Council of Sacramento discussed preventing child abuse through coordinated early childhood services such as those supported by First 5 state and local commissions. Citing the existence of more than 500,000 reports of child abuse in California each year, Anderson shared research and stated that “adverse childhood experiences are the most important determinant of later health.”

Hannah Matthews of the Center for Law and Social Policy discussed sustainability and explored ways programs could institutionalize their school readiness efforts. She emphasized to the group to “make the case now for investing in early childhood so when the money is there, you can move on it” and suggested that counties “use data to back up programs as a means to help ensure

sustainability.”

The afternoon concluded with a panel discussion on program evaluation. First 5 staff and contractors representing Stanislaus, San Joaquin, San Mateo and Santa Clara county commissions discussed their efforts to use longitudinal studies to evaluate their School Readiness Programs and stressed that these are a “key part of sustainability.”

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Sid the Science Kid is Coming!



First 5 California joined KCET-TV and the Jim Henson Company to introduce this bright, new animated preschool TV series at a reception at the annual conference. The series premieres on PBS stations September 1 and features Sid, an "inquisitive youngster" who uses comedy to tackle questions kids have about basic scientific principles, then searches for the answers to why things work the way they do.



Moises Ramon, Lisa Henson and Kris Perry are excited about their partnership and the introduction of "Sid the Science Kid" series on PBS.

Henson Company co-CEO Lisa Henson and “Sid” content advisor, Moises Ramon provided some background on the series, answered questions and shared a 10-minute “Sid” series video clip, “Why are my shoes shrinking?”

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Annual Report Update

First 5 California's Research and Evaluation Division mailed letters May 16 informing counties of Annual Report, School Readiness and Power of Preschool reporting updates and improvements. The letter describes the updated Guidelines, revised online forms and upcoming training opportunities. A copy of the letter is available at <http://www.first5eval.com/reporting0708.htm>.

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Legislative Deadlines and Updates

May 30 was the last day to pass bills out of their house of origin; June 27 is the last day for policy committees to meet and report bills, and; August 31 is the last day for bills to be passed by the Legislature.

There are two bills supported by First 5 California, SB 1629 (Steinberg) and AB 2759 (Jones); both have been the subject of large stakeholder group meetings.

SB 1629, introduced by state Senator Darrell Steinberg, would establish a commission to create an early learning quality improvement system. The provisions of this bill include a framework for improving program quality and an enhanced funding structure that provides the necessary resources for programs to achieve higher quality, and the support and opportunity for teachers to attain higher levels of education.

AB 2759, introduced by Assemblyman Dave Jones, would streamline and consolidate the state's existing preschool programs that serve children 3 to 5 years of age.

First 5 California continues to explore ways to be part of this year's budget solution to help support programs for young children.

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California Judges Host First 5

Sarah Neville-Morgan, First 5 California deputy director of Program Management, participated in a

panel presentation at the California Judges Association Mid-Year Conference on May 3 along with Jolene Smith, First 5 Santa Clara executive director and Linda Carpenter, a First 5 Santa Clara consultant. The presentation, "Going up in smoke: How cigarette tax dollars can help the children in your court," covered the genesis of Proposition 10, the First 5 structure, major First 5 California programs, with an emphasis on Safe from the Start, and First 5 Santa Clara's system of care. Santa Clara's program includes a partnership with the county court enabling them to draw down federal funds to expand support services to children involved in the court system in Santa Clara County.

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Check Out New Children's Health Data

First 5 California and the UCLA Center for Health Policy Research are offering a new online resource that provides users with quick and easy-to-read profiles of children's health statistics in California. The "Young Children's Health in California" report is available at www.healthsnapshots.org.

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"First 5's Top 5" Partnership with KCRA Official!



As you've most likely seen in recent months, Kris Perry has been a recurring guest on the KCRA-3 on My 58 morning show in Sacramento. We're happy to report that First 5 California and KCRA are making this partnership official through regular monthly segments. Dubbed "First 5's Top 5," each segment will include Kris delivering five healthy-living tips for Sacramento-area parents. For consistency with county commission programming, the segments will typically coincide with First 5 monthly materials topics and will

partner with county commissions when appropriate to highlight local programs and services.

Kris appeared on the show most recently on June 3 to discuss healthy eating tips. The clip is currently available on KCRA's Web site:
<http://www.kcra.com/video/16480401/index.html>

We expect the "First 5's Top 5" segment to occur the first Tuesday of every month during KCRA's 8 a.m. morning program, although the timeslot could always change due to breaking news. Be sure to tune in!

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Hmong-American Overview and Outreach Workshop in Yuba

On May 19 First 5 California conducted a Hmong-American Overview and Outreach workshop specifically tailored to issues affecting the population in the region comprising Yuba, Sutter and Butte counties. IW Group, First 5 California's Asian Pacific Islander American (APIA) subcontractor, presented a brief overview of this unique segment of the APIA population; a history of the group both in the U.S. and the region; cultural, demographic and psychographic information; and, current health and socioeconomic issues facing the Hmong community. The workshop at First 5 Yuba also included referrals to local resources, as well as best practices in reaching Hmong-Americans. "I really enjoyed the Hmong Cultural Outreach training," said Rupy Hayre of AmeriCorps - ABC Family Resource Center. "I never knew how important the role of the extended family was and I also never knew that not all Hmong can read or write the written language."

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Evaluation Technical Assistance

The Research and Evaluation Team held a technical assistance conference call on May 19. The notes from this call and information about

accessing the conference call recording are on the First 5 Web site under Statewide Evaluation. Please check the Web site for details regarding the next technical assistance conference call scheduled for Tuesday, June 24 from 10:00-10:30 am.

As a reminder, if you have any evaluation questions or if you need assistance with PEDS, please e-mail evaluation@ccfc.ca.gov.

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Special Needs Project Training and Technical Assistance Contractor on Board

The WestEd Center for Prevention and Early Intervention is the new training and technical assistance contractor for the First 5 California Special Needs Project. WestEd's Center for Prevention and Early Intervention provides nationally-recognized training, technical assistance and resources for education, special education, early intervention, and child care. With just over a year of state funding left for the Special Needs Project, WestEd will be jumping in quickly to provide services to the 10 demonstration sites. One of the first tasks will be to coordinate a project-wide Network Meeting for project coordinators and supervisors, county partners, and state staff. This meeting is scheduled for October and will focus on sustainability.

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2007-08 Annual Report and School Readiness Data Training Opportunities

Beginning in July, First 5 California will host training sessions throughout the state for First 5 county commission staff on how to access the new forms and report Annual Report and School Readiness data. To register for a training session, please e-mail evaluation@ccfc.ca.gov. We will register attendees in the order received, until we reach capacity. At that time additional dates will be evaluated depending on demand.

The training dates and locations are listed at

http://www.simplesend.com/clientimages/First5CA/2007-08_Training_Opportunities.pdf.

Additional information will be posted at <http://www.first5eval.com/reportingtools.htm> as it becomes available.

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County Fund Distributions

Monthly Distributions for Fiscal Year 2007/08 are maintained on the First 5 California Web site at www.ccfc.ca.gov/commission/fiscal.asp. The report titled "Disbursement to Counties" provides current information on the total funds to date authorized for release by First 5 California to First 5 county commissions.

First 5 California has processed the authorization for the State Controller's Office to release the following: (1) February and March 2008 Tax Revenues and (2) Program disbursements and reimbursements to select counties for School Readiness, CARES, Health Access, and Special Needs.

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Tax Revenue Projections

The Department of Finance (DOF) is responsible for producing tax revenue projections for the General Fund. While a small percentage of the cigarette and tobacco products tax is directed to the General Fund, the DOF must provide these tax revenue projections for the Governor's Budget. The DOF provides tax revenue projections for the current year plus four additional budget years. First 5 California will use the DOF revenue projections to support future revenue projections for First 5 California and the 58 First 5 county commissions.

In May, the DOF released to First 5 California revised cigarette and tobacco products tax revenue projections. First 5 California released to Executive Directors the tax revenue projections for fiscal years 2007/08 through 2011/12.

DOF and First 5 California have worked collaboratively to establish communication regarding the tax revenue projections. The DOF has agreed to provide First 5 California the following:

- Each January, a five-year projection after release of the Governor's Budget.
- Each May, following release of the May Revise, updates to the five-year projections.

First 5 California's commitment to the counties includes the following:

- In February of each year, First 5 California will update and release the tax revenue projections based on DOF's General Fund tax projections. (These projections will always be a five-year projection - current year plus four).
- In June/July of each year, First 5 California will notify counties of any changes to the earlier released tax revenue projections as a result of changes in the May revise.
- In July/August of each year, First 5 California will contact the Department of Health Services Vital Statistics office to obtain actual birthrate data for the new fiscal year disbursements and share that information with counties.

First 5 California will continue to monitor DOF's tax revenue projections and communicate with counties when there are significant gaps between projections and actual revenues.

If you have questions regarding tax revenue, please contact Sandy Beck at (916) 263-1018, or by e-mail at sbeck@ccfc.ca.gov. For questions regarding program funding, contact your assigned program consultant.

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